

**Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and
English Language Learners Used by States and NAEP**

**Suggested Model Rules for Uniform
National Criteria for NAEP Testing
in National and State Samples**

**Issues Paper Developed for Consideration by
the National Assessment Governing Board**

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Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners Used by States and NAEP

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to describe the manner in which more students with disabilities and English language learners might participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) commissioned this paper because of differences in participation rates between the statewide assessments required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law and NAEP assessments, seeking ways to make participation in the assessments at the state and national levels consistent. These differences may well be an important factor in the levels of performance of some states on NAEP, as well as gains in performance over time. Hence, it is important to seek consistency – both between states themselves, as well as with NAEP.

This paper is organized to cover several topics. First, NCLB and other Federal assessment requirements for students with disabilities and English language learners are reviewed. Next, a review of the assessment accommodations provided by NAEP and the states is shown. Then, another list of accommodations – these provided by states but not permitted for NAEP will be provided. Finally, recommendations for making the rates of participation consistent between NAEP and the states will be provided. Attachment A responds to specific issues raised by NAGB staff related to the participation of students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL) in the NAEP assessments.

Introduction

The recently released state-by-state results of the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) marks the 3rd time that all states and political jurisdictions have participated in the NAEP assessment as required under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. As such, the NAEP state results provided the first insight into whether progress made within states toward achieving state mathematics and reading standards translates into similar progress being made on the common set of standards represented by the NAEP content.

NAEP produces national and state results based on a common yardstick for measuring the progress of students' education in grades 4, 8, and 12 across the country. While each state has its own unique standards, assessments, and accountability system, NAEP state and urban district assessments in mathematics and reading ask the same questions and measure the same standards in every state and 11 large urban districts (18 in 2009)—thus making state and urban district comparisons possible.

NAEP has provided the nation with accurate and reliable information about student achievement in the United States since 1969. NAEP is a survey assessment in that it

relies on the sampling and testing of a small portion of the student population to estimate the educational performance of students from across the nation, as well as those in all the states, specific urban districts, and to report the results for important demographic subgroups.

The validity and reliability of the findings from the NAEP surveys are dependent, among other factors, on the degree to which the selected representative samples of schools and students effectively participate in the NAEP assessments. It is imperative that the samples of students tested at the national, state, and district levels be fully representative of the population they represent. The demographic configuration of the test sample must be similar to the population of students it represents. Each participating student represents hundreds of other similar students. These students represent various geographic, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups as well as special groups such as students with disabilities and limited English proficiency that is the make up of America's student body today.¹

In order to ensure an unbiased sample, NAEP established participation standards that states and districts are required to meet in order for their results to be reported. Consequently, strong efforts are made to ensure that students who have been selected and who are capable of being assessed meaningfully are included in the NAEP assessments. Some students who are sampled for participation are excluded due to specific disability or limited English language proficiency according to a set of criteria provided to participating schools by NAEP policymakers; this policy is supposed to be applied uniformly across the states. However, exclusion of SD and ELL in NAEP assessments has not been uniformly achieved across states and districts within assessment years and over time. It is likely that the variability in participation rates at the state or district level is related to the testing and accommodation policies and practices of assessment programs in individual states because local decisions about students' participation in NAEP assessments are frequently determined by rules for their participation in state assessments in grades 3 through 8 and high school.

NAEP Participation Rates at the National and State Levels

There is a wide range of state practices regarding exclusion or inclusion of SD and ELL from NAEP testing with exclusion rates ranging from as low as 2% of students to as high as 13% of students depending on the grade level and subject tested (see Tables 1 and 2). Furthermore, the percentages of SD and/or ELL that are excluded from NAEP assessments can be quite high, ranging from 6% to 70% of all students identified with these specific needs. As might be expected, exclusion rates for reading tests are generally higher than the mathematics tests. This is mainly due to additional accommodations offered on the mathematics assessment but not on the reading or writing assessments. Examples of such accommodations are the dual-language (English-Spanish bilingual version) mathematics booklet, test materials read aloud in Spanish, and the use of word-

¹ National Center for Education Statistics. (2008). *An Introduction to NAEP*, NCES 2008-480. Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Education.

for-word dictionaries. These accommodations are offered in mathematics but not in reading.

Table 1

**Fourth Grade Students with Disabilities (SD) and English Language Learners (ELL)
Identified, Excluded, and Assessed in NAEP Reading (1992-2007)**

Student Characteristics	Accommodation Not Permitted		Accommodation Permitted			
	1992	1998	2000	2003	2005	2007
SD &/or ELL						
Identified*	10	16	18	20	21	22
% Excluded	60	56	33	30	29	27
% Assessed	40	44	67	70	71	72
w/o Accom.	40	44	56	45	42	40
w/ Accom.	0	0	11	25	28	32
SD						
Identified*	7	11	11	13	13	13
% Excluded	57	55	36	38	38	31
% Assessed	43	45	64	62	62	69
w/o Accom.	43	55	45	31	23	23
w/ Accom.	0	0	19	31	38	46
ELL						
Identified*	3	6	8	9	10	10
% Excluded	67	50	37	22	20	20
% Assessed	33	50	63	78	80	80
w/o Accom.	33	50	63	67	60	60
w/ Accom.	0	0	0	11	20	20

* Percentage of total student population; all other figures are the percentage of the identified student population of SD & ELL students.

Table 2**States with the Highest and Lowest Exclusion Rates****Fourth Grade Public School Students with Disabilities (SD) and English Language Learners (ELL) Identified and Excluded in 2007 NAEP Reading Assessment
(Percentage of All Students)**

	% Identified	% Excluded	% Exclusion Rate*
SD Highest			
1. District of Columbia	15	11	73
2. Tennessee	16	10	63
3. Delaware	18	10	56
4. Georgia	13	8	61
5. North Dakota	15	8	53
SD Lowest			
1. West Virginia	17	2	12
2. North Carolina	15	2	13
3. Rhode Island	19	3	16
4. Mississippi	11	2	18
5. Hawaii	10	2	20
National (Public)	14	5	35
ELL Highest			
1. District of Columbia	9	4	44
2. Florida	10	4	40
3. New Mexico	23	8	35
4. Texas	16	5	31
5. Nevada	23	5	22
ELL Lowest			
1. California	33	2	6
2. Alaska	15	2	13
3. Colorado	15	2	13
4. Oregon	15	2	13
National (Public)	11	2	18

* Percentage of identified students who were excluded from NAEP assessment

The reason for the interest in studying the impact of varying participation rates and accommodation strategies of SD and ELL is that these participation rates may affect the validity of achievement results in a particular year for specific jurisdictions, cross-jurisdiction comparisons, and trend reporting. For example, students with disabilities and English language learners perform, on average, significantly lower than non-disabled students. Thus, high exclusion rates may produce inaccurate overall state estimates of student achievement.

There does appear to be some relationship between an increase in exclusion rates over time and score gains in some states and districts. NCES has studied this issue and found that, “while higher exclusion rates were not associated with higher average scores in 2005,” there does appear to be some relationship between an increase in exclusions over time and score gains, although, “exclusion increases do not explain the entirety of score gain.”²

Given the potential validity issues related to the comparability of state scores, wide variability in exclusion rates casts doubt on the accuracy and reliability of the achievement data of states and districts. Equally important, the variability in state participation rates of their special need populations limits NAEP’s ability to accurately gauge the achievement progress over time and to compare results across states or within a state from one assessment cycle to the next.

Before delving into the issues of how students with disabilities and English language learners participate in state assessments or in NAEP, it is important to review Federal law, regulations and policy related to assessment participation for these groups of students.

Assessment of Students with Disabilities

There are several ways in which students with disabilities participate in the assessments administered at the state level. It is the local Individualized Educational Program (IEP) team that makes this decision, based on the level and nature of the student’s disabilities. These choices are as follows

- Some students participate in state assessments without accommodations, taking the assessments as general education students do.
- Other students with disabilities participate using accommodations that the state or district make available to them. Ideally, these should be ones used daily in instruction. The range and types of accommodations available to students vary by state.

² Institute of Educational Sciences. (2008). *Measuring the status and change of NAEP state inclusion rates for students with disabilities (NCES 2009-453)*. Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Education.

If the general education assessments are not appropriate for the students with disabilities, even with accommodations, students with disabilities can use alternate assessments based on:

- Modified achievement standards (AA-MAS). These are assessments that cover the same skills as in the general assessments—such as writing an essay—but the task has been simplified in some manner. It might be to write a short paragraph summarizing a story that was read instead of a longer essay on the same topic. It is anticipated that about 2% of the students could take the AA-MAS (if the state decides to create this optional assessment), or
- Alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS). These are assessments of the same standards as the general education assessment, but set at a much lower level. It is anticipated that about 1% of all students—those with the most severe disabilities—will take the AA-AAS. Each state is required to have an AA-AAS and although more than 1% can participate in it, the percentage that can be counted as proficient in the state assessment system is limited to the 1% target statewide.

Federal law requires all students be taught the same academic content standards. Yet, there are students with disabilities for whom the general education standards may not be realistic as written. How should teachers assess these students with mild to moderate disabilities? For these students, the state may *modify* the academic performance standards to level(s) at which the students can work and experience success. The goal is to help these students achieve as much of the academic content standards as possible over time. The modified assessment of writing (AA-MAS) given above is an example of such modification.

Currently, there is no NAEP that is designed to be alternate assessment for the students who participate in their states' AA-MAS or AA-AAS, so this is one difference between NAEP and the states. NAEP is not required to have an alternate assessment for students with severe disabilities, or to assess 100% of the students with disabilities, as states are required. This is in large measure because state assessments provide individual student results for both diagnostic and accountability purposes germane to the student, while NAEP does not provide any individual student results, only group results. As will be described later, the development and use of an AA-MAS for NAEP might be feasible.

It is important to raise a dichotomy that is contained in Federal special education policy from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) Office of Special Education Policy (OSEP) that affects both states and NAEP. Since late 1999, local IEP teams have been free to choose any assessment accommodation for a student as they see fit. At the same time, states have had the responsibility of designating how accommodated assessments will be reported. Hence, it is quite possible for a student to use an accommodation designated by the state as “non-standard”—one that changes the construct being assessed and that the state is thus required to consider being an invalid assessment. Because the assessment is invalid, the student does not count as participating nor is included in the performance of the subgroup of students with disabilities (the student still counts as a student who should be assessed, but was not, thus affecting whether the school had at

least 95% of the students participating in the assessment). If a school or district has more than 5% of the subgroup not participating, they automatically are designated as not having made adequate yearly progress. This puts pressure on the IEP team to use “standard” accommodations only, although the state cannot force it to do so.

This “power” of the IEP team to decide accommodations decisions more or less independently of the state also affects NAEP accommodations decisions. Although NAGB can designate certain accommodations as permissible and others as not permissible, it is the local IEP team that makes the final decision, by federal policy. Hence, incentives will be needed to increase participation of students with disabilities. These may include provision of different assessments and a broader range of accommodations.

Since NAEP is a low-stakes assessment that does not report student-level data, the Individual with Disability Act (IDEA) requires that a student’s IEP neither addresses appropriate accommodations for NAEP nor that all of the accommodations on the IEP for state- and district-wide assessments be used in the administration of NAEP. Therefore, IEP teams should not require that a student receive the same particular accommodation on a state and district test as on the NAEP testing if that accommodation is not available to NAEP.

Assessment of English Language Learners

Historically, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has recognized English language learners (ELL)—called “limited English proficient students” or “LEP” students in NAEP reports—as an important segment of the assessment sample.

ELL are students whose home language is other than English and who are required to participate in the assessments mandated by NCLB, both under Title I and Title III of the Act. The manner in which these ELL participate is important to understand. The two important types of assessments given to these students include:

- English language proficiency assessments (Title III): These assessments are required by NCLB Title III. ELL are to be assessed annually while considered to be an English language learner, as well as for two additional years after they are determined to be English proficient. These assessments are in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening and separate scores are reported in these areas as well as an overall comprehension score. These assessments help to determine when the ELL student may be able to succeed independently in classes taught in English.
- Academic achievement assessments (Title I): These are the same assessments that other students are taking for Title I purposes, in mathematics, science, English language arts/reading, and other content areas. The ELL category is one that schools are held accountable for under NCLB, so it is important that educators monitor the achievement of these students in the academic areas in order to assure that these students are learning academics even as they are learning English.

ELL who are in their first year of school attendance in the United States may be excluded from the state's NCLB English language arts/reading assessment for one year so long as they have taken the state's English language proficiency assessment. These same students must participate in the state's mathematics and science assessments, although their scores do not count for NCLB accountability purposes for the first year.

To make it a bit easier for ELL to participate in the state assessments, a variety of assessment accommodations are available to them. These include:

- Extended time
- Special test site
- Use of a translated version of the assessment (either in print or presented orally), usually in content areas such as mathematics and science
- Use of a bilingual (word-to-word) dictionary
- Use of scribes to record their verbal answers to the test items

The accommodations available to students vary by state.

Assessment Accommodations Provided by NAEP and the States

In order to investigate the causes of differential participation of students with disabilities and English language learners in state assessments and NAEP, a survey of NAEP and state accommodations policies was undertaken. Each state's website was used to locate the most recent version of their assessment accommodations policies and to compare those available from the National Center for Education Statistics for NAEP.

Accommodations policies were available from virtually all fifty states; state education agencies that did not have accommodations policies were contacted to provide written policies to complete the study.

State accommodation policies vary widely in terms of number of accommodations offered, the length of explanatory text that accompanied each accommodation in the list, as well as the generality of the list. Many states provide only a single list, although they may have several different statewide testing programs of different students and different content areas. Only a handful of states differentiate between different assessment components administered at the state level, and of this number, fewer still listed the NAEP accommodations among the different assessments. While several states cautioned accommodations users that a different set of accommodations are available, or not to assume that state-permitted accommodations could also be used for NAEP, these websites did not provide ready access to a list of NAEP-approved accommodations for local educators to use in making participation decisions.

As can be seen in Table 3, most states offer the same assessment accommodations that are offered by NAEP. Several notes about this table are in order. First, the absence of an indication that a state considers an accommodation as "standard" does not mean necessarily that the state would not permit such an accommodation to be used. Some

states' lists of accommodations were so short that almost none of the accommodations provided for NAEP are listed. In addition, almost every state has some mechanism for local IEP teams to request an accommodation that is not on the list, so that a local IEP team could request permission to use an accommodation or a combination of accommodations not provided on the states' lists. It was not clear from most states' websites how often these accommodation requests are approved or the process by which such requests are considered.

Table 3—NAEP Accommodations Also Provided by States

Accommodations for SDs	NAEP			AL	AK	AZ	AR	CA	CO	CT	DE	FL	GA	HI	ID	IL	IN	IA	KS	KY	LA
Presentation	Math	Rdg	Sc																		
Has directions read aloud/repeated in English or receives assistance to understand directions1	Yes	Yes	Yes		S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has directions only signed	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has test items signed*	Yes	No	Yes		S				S	S	S		S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has occasional words or phrases read aloud	Yes	No	Yes		S						S	S	S	S		S		S	S	S	S
Has all or most of the test materials read aloud*	Yes	No	Yes		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Uses a Braille version of the test	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Uses a large-print version of the test	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Uses magnifying equipment				S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S			S	S	S	S
Response Format																					
Responds in sign language	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S				S	S	S	S		S				S	S		S
Uses a Braille typewriter to respond	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S			S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Points to answers or responds orally to a scribe	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Tape records answers	No	No	No		S						S	S				S		S	S	S	S
Uses a computer or typewriter to respond—no spell/grammar check allowed	Yes	Yes	Yes		S			S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Uses a template to respond	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S				S	S	S	
Uses large marking pen or special writing tool	Yes	Yes	Yes		S	S			S		S	S	S	S			S	S	S		
Writes directly in test booklet1	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S
Setting Format																					
Takes the test in small group (5 or fewer)	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S			S	S
Takes the test one-on-one	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Takes the test in a study carrel	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S			S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Receives preferential seating, special lighting, or furniture	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has test administered by a familiar person	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S							S			S	S				

Accommodations for SDs	NAEP			AL	AK	AZ	AR	CA	CO	CT	DE	FL	GA	HI	ID	IL	IN	IA	KS	KY	LA
	Math	Rdg	Sc																		
Timing Accommodations																					
Receives extended time	Yes	Yes	Yes		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Given breaks during the test	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Takes test session over several days	No	No	No		S			S			S				S						S
Other Accommodations																					
Uses a calculator, including talking or Braille calculator, for computation tasks**	No	No	No	C		N			S		S		C		C		C	S	S	S	S
Uses an abacus, arithmetic tables, graph paper	No	No	No	S	S	S	S				S				S			S		S	S
Uses dictionary, thesaurus, or spelling and grammar-checking software or devices	No	No	No	S		S					S			S				S	S	S	S
Accommodations for English Language Learners																					
Direct Linguistic Support																					
Has directions read aloud/repeated in English or receives assistance to understand directions ¹	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S				S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has directions only read aloud in native language	Yes	No	Yes	S	S	S			S	S	S	S			S	S		S		S	S
Has test materials read aloud in native language*	Yes	No	Yes						S		S									S	
Uses a bilingual version of the booklet (Spanish/English only)	Yes	No	Yes								S										
Uses a bilingual word-for-word dictionary without definitions	Yes	No	Yes	S	S		S	S		S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has occasional words or phrases read aloud in English	Yes	No	Yes	S			S					S	S		S				S	S	S
Has all or most of the test materials read aloud in English*	Yes	No	Yes	S		S	S				S		S		S		S		S	S	S
Has oral or written responses in native language translated into written English	No	No	No								S				S						

Accommodations for SDs	NAEP			AL	AK	AZ	AR	CA	CO	CT	DE	FL	GA	HI	ID	IL	IN	IA	KS	KY	LA
	Math	Rdg	Sc																		
Indirect Linguistic Support																					
Takes the test in small group (5 or fewer)	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S			S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S
Takes the test one-on-one	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S
Receives preferential seating	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S			S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has test administered by familiar person	Yes	Yes	Yes			S						S	S				S				S
Receives extended time	Yes	Yes	Yes	S			S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Is given breaks during the test	Yes	Yes	Yes	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Takes test session over several days	No	No	No	S							S	N			S						S

Accommodations for SDs	ME	MD	MA	MI	MN	MS	MO	MT	NE	NV	NH	NJ	NM	NY	NC	ND	OH	OK	OR	PA	RI	SC	SD	TN
Has directions read aloud/repeated in English or receives assistance to understand directions1	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has directions only signed		S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has test items signed	S	S	S	S	S		S		S			S	S		S	S	S	S		S		S	S	S
Has occasional words or phrases read aloud	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S			S	S		S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S
Has all or most of the test materials read aloud	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Uses a Braille version of the test	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S
Uses a large-print version of the test	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Uses magnifying equipment	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S
Response Format																								
Responds in sign language	S	S	S	S			S		S			S			S			S						
Uses a Braille typewriter to respond	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S			S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	
Points to answers or responds orally to a scribe	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Tape records answers	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S		S				S	S	S	S		S	
Uses a computer or typewriter to respond—no spell/grammar check allowed	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	
Uses a template to respond	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S			S	S	S		S	S	S	
Uses large marking pen or special writing tool	S			S			S			S		S	S	S			S	S	S			S	S	
Writes directly in test booklet1	S	S	S	S	S	S			S	S			S	S	S		S	S	S	S		S	S	S
Setting Format																								
Takes the test in small group (5 or fewer)	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Takes the test one-on-one	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S

Accommodations for SDs	ME	MD	MA	MI	MN	MS	MO	MT	NE	NV	NH	NJ	NM	NY	NC	ND	OH	OK	OR	PA	RI	SC	SD	TN
Takes the test in a study carrel	S		S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Receives preferential seating, special lighting, or furniture	S		S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S			S	S	S	S	S	S
Has test administered by a familiar person	S		S	S		S		S			S	S	S			S					S			
Timing Accommodations																								
Receives extended time	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S		S	S	S	S	S	S
Is given breaks during the test	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S		S	S	S	S	S	S
Takes test session over several days						S	S	S						S					S			S		S
Other Accommodations																								
Uses a calculator, including talking or Braille calculator, for computation tasks	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S		S			S				S	S
Uses an abacus, arithmetic tables, graph paper	S	S		S	S		S			S	S		S	S	S			S	S	S	S		S	S
Uses dictionary, thesaurus, or spelling and grammar-checking software or devices		S				S			S														S	
Accommodations for English Language Learners																								
Direct Linguistic Support																								
Has directions read aloud/repeated in English or receives assistance to understand directions		S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S
Has directions only read aloud in native language	S			S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S				S	S	S	S	S		
Has test materials read aloud in native language	S			S	S		S						S	S				S	S	S		S		
Uses a bilingual version of the booklet (Spanish/English only)		S	S	S	S							S		S				S	S	S				

Accommodations for SDs	ME	MD	MA	MI	MN	MS	MO	MT	NE	NV	NH	NJ	NM	NY	NC	ND	OH	OK	OR	PA	RI	SC	SD	TN
Uses a bilingual word-for-word dictionary without definitions	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S		S		S	S	S	
Has occasional words or phrases read aloud in English				S		S		S	S				S	S			S	S	S	S		S	S	S
Has all or most of the test materials read aloud in English		S		S		S	S	S	S	S			S	S	S	S	S		S	S		S	S	S
Has oral or written responses in native language translated into written English	S			S						S			S	S				S						
Indirect Linguistic Support																								
Takes the test in small group (5 or fewer)	S		S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S
Takes the test one-on-one	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S
Receives preferential seating	S	S	S	S		S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S
Has test administered by familiar person	S		S	S		S		S		S		S	S											
Receives extended time	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S
Is given breaks during the test	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S
Takes test session over several days		S				S	S	S		S				S					S			S		

Accommodations for SDs	TX	UT	VT	VA	WA	WV	WI	WY
Has directions read aloud/repeated in English or receives assistance to understand directions1		S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has directions only signed	S	S	S		S	S	S	S
Has test items signed		S			S	S	S	S
Has occasional words or phrases read aloud		S		S	S	S		S
Has all or most of the test materials read aloud	S	S	S	S	S	S		S
Uses a Braille version of the test	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Uses a large-print version of the test	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Uses magnifying equipment	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Response Format								
Responds in sign language							S	
Uses a Braille typewriter to respond	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Points to answers or responds orally to a scribe	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Tape records answers		S	S	S			S	S
Uses a computer or typewriter to respond—no spell/grammar check allowed	S	S	S	S		S	S	S
Uses a template to respond	S		S				S	S
Uses large marking pen or special writing tool	S			S	S			
Writes directly in test booklet1	S	S		S				S
Setting Format								
Takes the test in small group (5 or fewer)	S	S	S		S	S	S	S
Takes the test one-on-one	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Takes the test in a study carrel	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Receives preferential seating, special lighting, or furniture	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Has test administered by a familiar person			S					
Timing Accommodations								

Accommodations for SDs	TX	UT	VT	VA	WA	WV	WI	WY
Receives extended time		S	S	S	S		S	S
Is given breaks during the test		S	S	S	S		S	S
Takes test session over several days							S	S
Other Accommodations								
Uses a calculator, including talking or Braille calculator, for computation tasks	S	S			S		S	S
Uses an abacus, arithmetic tables, graph paper	S		S	S	S	S		S
Uses dictionary, thesaurus, or spelling and grammar-checking software or devices	S							
Accommodations for English Language Learners								
Direct Linguistic Support								
Has directions read aloud/repeated in English or receives assistance to understand directions ¹	S	S		S	S		S	S
Has directions only read aloud in native language	S	S	S		S		S	
Has test materials read aloud in native language		S			S		S	
Uses a bilingual version of the booklet (Spanish/English only)	S							
Uses a bilingual word-for-word dictionary without definitions	S		S	S			S	
Has occasional words or phrases read aloud in English	S			S	S		S	
Has all or most of the test materials read aloud in English	S			S	S		S	S
Has oral or written responses in native language translated into written English							S	S

Indirect Linguistic Support								
Takes the test in small group (5 or fewer)		S	S	S	S		S	S
Takes the test one-on-one		S	S	S	S		S	S
Receives preferential seating		S	S	S	S		S	S
Has test administered by familiar person								
Receives extended time	S	S	S	S	S		S	S
Is given breaks during the test	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Takes test session over several days							S	

1 Accommodations that are standard NAEP practice, and so are not considered as accommodations.

2 Accommodations for main NAEP mathematics and reading also pertain for Long-Term Trend mathematics and reading.

NOTE: Some of the above accommodations may be provided by school, district, and state as long as permitted by NAEP.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational

Progress (NAEP) 2008 Arts, 2008 Long-Term Trend, 2007 Mathematics, Reading, Writing, 2006 Civics, Economics, U.S. History, and 2005 Science Assessments.

*State permits all but the Reading/ELA test to be read aloud

**Only permitted where other students are permitted to use calculators

Assessment Accommodations Provided by States but not NAEP

A second review was conducted of states' accommodations versus those allowed by NAEP. This review focused on state-permitted ("standard") accommodations that are not included explicitly in the NAEP list. The goal was to identify potential additional accommodations that might be added to the list that states permit local IEP teams to use that result in valid scores on their state assessments. Table 4 presents this list of accommodations, as well as the number of states that permit the accommodation and the specific states that do so. Again, keep in mind that this list might be larger for the same reasons cited above – the shortness of some states' lists of accommodations, as well as the right of local IEP teams to request accommodations not provided on the state list.

As can be seen, the most popular state accommodations not offered by NAEP include the following:

- Use audio amplification equipment to deliver test (35 states)
- Tape recorded responses (29 states)
- Administer test at best time for student (22 states)
- Present test on audiotape or videotape (18 states)
- Use Voice recognition/speech-to-text software, e.g., Dragon Dictate (18 states)
- Administer test at home or outside of school (14 states)
- Adult uses highlighter to highlight words in directions (13 states)
- Oral or written responses translated into English (13 states)

Cost Effectiveness and Feasibility of Accommodations

The goal for NAGB is to ensure that NAEP tested samples at the national, state, and district levels should be as representative as possible and that high percentages of SD and ELL would and could participate meaningfully in the NAEP assessment without eroding the validity of the construct being measured. This study identified common assessment accommodations that are permitted in many state and district testing programs. If these accommodations are technically valid and financially feasible, it may be appropriate for NAGB to consider moving toward adopting the same accommodations for NAEP to bring about more uniformity in participation rates across states and districts for future NAEP assessments.

However, not all accommodations are likely to be implemented by NAEP, especially those that are not logistically manageable or financially affordable. For national, state, and district assessments there are substantial costs associated with providing Braille, large print, glossary of terms, and similar accommodations. Translation of NAEP assessment instruments into many languages found in the ELL population poses feasibility problems because of the technical issues concerning translation as well as cost and resource limitations.³ NAGB and NCES should track the cost effectiveness of

³ Abedi, J., Hofstetter, C. & Lord, C. (2004), Spring. Assessment accommodations for English language learners. *Review of Educational Research*, 75, 15-21.

**Table 4 State Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners
Not Offered for the NAEP Assessment**

Accommodation	Number	Specific States
Timing/Scheduling		
1. Administer test at best time for the student	22	AK, AL, CA, CT, GA, LA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, MT, NH, NV, NM, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SD, TN, VT
2. Administer test over several days	9	AK, CA, DE, LA, ME, MD, MS, NY, TX
Setting		
1. Use checklist to remind student of tasks to be completed	1	AK
2. Administer assessment at home	14	AL, CA, ME, MI, MS, MT, NH, NJ, NC, ND, RI, TN, VT, WI
Presentation		
1. Clarify directions in native language	2	AK, ID
2. Provide written copy of oral directions in English	4	AK, ID, KY, VA
3. Writing helpful words on paper or board	1	AK
4. Ask questions about directions/Ask student to repeat directions to check for comprehension	7	AK, DE, ID, KS, ME, MI, MT
5. Present directions on an overhead	3	AK, LA, VA
6. Adult uses highlighter to highlight words in directions	13	AK, ID, MS, MT, NH, NY, ND, OR, PA, RI, SC, VT, WI
7. Present test on audiotape or videotape	18	AK, CA, HI, ID, ME, MD, MI, MN, NE, NM, OH, OR, PA, SD, TX, VA, WA, WI
8. Read multi-step problems one step at a time	2	AK, NE
9. Turn pages for student	3	AK, WI, WY
10. Use adaptive equipment to deliver test	7	AK, AL, AZ, KS, NM, NY, OH
11. Use audio amplification equipment to deliver test	35	AK, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, GA, KY, ME, MD, MA, MI, MT, NE, NH, NJ, NV, NY, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WA, WV, WI, WY
12. Use dictionaries that have definitions	4	KY, MD, MA, MS
13. Communication board	6	KY, LA, MS, MO, PA, VA
14. Student reads test to self	4	NY, SC, TN, TX
Response		
1. Provide native language word for unknown word at request of student	1	AK
2. Provide students with more room to write their writing response	2	AK, SC
3. Use whiteboard for student to record answers	1	AZ
4. Voice recognition/speech-to-text software (e.g., Dragon Dictate)	18	CT, DE, KS, KY, ME, MD, MI, MN, MT, NE, NH, ND, PA, RI, UT, VT, WA, WY

5. Oral or written responses translated into English	13	DE, ID, IL, ME, MD, MN, NV, NM, NY, OK, PA, WI, WY
6. Tape recorded answers	29	AK, DE, FL, IL, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MO, MT, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OK, OR, PA, RI, SD, UT, VT, VA, WI, WY

various accommodations and evaluate the benefits derived from additional accommodations especially at the 4th grade level where research studies show results that are inconclusive and contradictory.

To be effective, the accommodations should help the SD and ELL test takers by helping them overcome their specific disabilities or language barriers. In other words, it should level the playing field, which may be evident in improving the observed performance of SD and ELL students. For an accommodation to be effective it must minimize the disability or language proficiency effects and enable the SD and ELL test takers to demonstrate their content area knowledge and skills without altering the test construct being measured. The use of appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of students will not only increase participation in the NAEP assessment, but will produce more valid and reliable estimates of what students know and can do in the various subject areas and grade levels.

Recommendations for the National Assessment Governing Board

As a result of gathering materials from the states and comparing them to the list of NAEP assessment accommodations, there are several recommendations about how to bring about greater comparability among the states. These include:

- 1.** NAGB and/or NCES should prepare a standard list of accommodations that are permitted, customizing this list as necessary for the different assessments offered by NAEP (for example, an accommodation such as reading aloud the test questions is permitted for the mathematics assessment but not permitted for the reading assessment).
- 2.** NAGB should examine the accommodations that states provide to local IEP teams that are not made available for NAEP and consider whether any of these could be provided without jeopardizing the validity of the assessments or making the assessment process unduly complicated. Permitting more of these accommodations to be used would encourage more students with disabilities to participate in NAEP, thus making the participation rates across states more comparable.
- 3.** Describe each available accommodation in detail. A simple list of available accommodations leaves too much uncertainty for local IEP teams. There are several states that have created detailed specifications for each accommodation that they permit local IEP teams to use in order for students' scores to count. If such specifications are prepared and then made widely available to IEP teams, they will better understand the nature of the accommodation and how it should be used, thus be better able to determine if the student can participate and if so, what accommodations would be suitable.
- 4.** Make sure that each location in print or on a web site that provides the list of accommodations reproduces the list in an identical manner. For example, the list of accommodations found on the NAEP webpage does not precisely correspond to the "Flip Chart" that the contractor provides to the NAEP assessment field staff. There are a couple of accommodations listed in the Flip Chart that are not on the NAEP webpage. These

sorts of differences will tend to confuse local IEP teams. Instead, the list should be provided to schools via the NAEP and NAGB websites, and used by the NAEP field staff so that there is consistency in what accommodations are and are not permitted for NAEP.

5. Ask each state to review the NAEP accommodations list to determine if comparable accommodations are permitted (considered to be “standard”) in their state. It is essential that at the same time that local IEP teams make decisions about participation in state assessments that they also make comparable decisions about NAEP assessments. One way to assure that this occurs (beyond the steps listed above) is to request that each State NAEP State Coordinator review the NAEP accommodations in light of their own lists and to make sure that where comparable accommodations are permitted, this is so indicated.

6. Request that each state place the NAEP assessment accommodations (as enhanced above) in a prominent place on their website, preferably next to or within the states’ lists of accommodations for the state-sponsored assessments or in a separate document readily available at the same location on their website. Several states did note that a different set of accommodations is used for the NAEP assessments, but only a handful of states actually provided the list of state and NAEP accommodations in a comparable manner (and easily accessible). If IEP teams are to make comparable decisions, they need to have access to the complete and detailed list of NAEP accommodations along with the state accommodations for both students with disabilities and English language learners.

7. NAGB and/or NCES should review the designations listed by states in the states’ accommodations lists and policies that apply to the NAEP assessments to make certain that what states say is or is not permissible for NAEP is accurate and complete. This will avoid states providing inaccurate or incomplete lists of accommodations that are permitted.

8. NAGB should consider developing the equivalent of an alternate assessment of modified achievement standards (AA-MAS). Such an assessment is designed for students who have demonstrated their positive response to intervention, are in a regular classroom being taught the regular academic content standards, but are struggling academically. Assessments based on modified achievement standards (AA-MAS) are permitted for these students. One way that this could be done for the NAEP assessment is to use items in the lower range of the NAEP statistical scales in order to place the students on the NAEP achievement scales. This would permit a larger number of low-performing students with disabilities to participate in NAEP successfully. Such assessments might encourage more IEP teams to permit these students to participate in the NAEP program.

9. NAGB should use the states’ definitions of which students are eligible for the AA-MAS to determine which students are offered NAEP tests described in number 8 above, since the states’ definitions need to be very precise according to USED policy. Because the students who are eligible for the AA-MAS are already identified by the local IEP teams following guidelines developed by each state, it would be possible to use these state-developed definitions to determine the eligible students. While state definitions of

AA-MAS are evolving, currently the percentage of students with disabilities is included in the state AA-MAS testing and are in the range of 2-5 percent. This is due to the federal limitation of 2% of AA-MAS assessment students that can be included in the proficient category on the AYP determination.

Suggested Guidelines of Participation Rules for Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners on the NAEP Assessment

The following guidelines are proposed as a possible model for participation of SD and ELL students in NAEP assessments. Previous NAEP participation rules have not been applied uniformly across states due to conflicts with state accommodations and inclusion rules or the complexity of the NAEP model. The proposed guidelines build on state rules for inclusion of students on state and district assessments and are consistent with NAEP technical requirements. The proposed guidelines are technically feasible and financially reasonable. If state, district, and school personnel implement these guidelines faithfully, it is likely that NAEP participation rates will increase significantly, and there will be more uniformity in inclusion rates across states and districts participating in NAEP assessments. Such implementation will result in improved validity of interpretation and comparability of the NAEP results as well as improved reliability of the data collected.

Suggested Guidelines

1. All students who participate in the state assessments should participate in NAEP using NAEP accommodations as appropriate.
2. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who, according to their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, take the state alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) **MAY** be excluded from any NAEP assessment. These students should be coded as “excluded” on the front of the NAEP Students with Disabilities Questionnaire.

(These students may have disabilities such as severe cognitive disabilities or autism and are usually tested as part of the state’s AA-AAS or the so-called 1% NCLB assessment).

3. Students with disabilities who participate in a state assessment measuring regular school curriculum should participate in NAEP with appropriate accommodations.

Some states currently offer modified or simplified versions of their regular tests (AA-MAS) to students with milder disabilities (often referred to as the 2% tests under NCLB). More states plan to do so. These students should be able to participate in NAEP with accommodations, especially if NAEP produces a special assessment booklet for SD and ELL students.

4. ELL students who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for less than twelve months **MAY** be excluded from NAEP reading or writing assessments if these students are excluded from the state assessments in reading and writing. These students should be coded as “excluded” on the front of the NAEP English Language Learners (ELL) Questionnaire.

5. All ELL students should be expected to participate in the NAEP mathematics and science assessments with appropriate accommodations offered by NAEP, even in their first year of enrollment in a school in the United States. Exceptions may be made for ELL students who may have had breaks in formal schooling or have experienced refugee status with no formal schooling for a period of time prior to NAEP testing.
6. NAEP is a timed test. SD and ELLs who receive an accommodation of additional time on a routine basis in the classroom and on state or district assessments should be allowed the extended time accommodation on NAEP assessments. SD and ELL students may have the extra time accommodation even though it may not be written in the students' IEP/LEP student assessment plan or Section 504 plan.

The provision of extra testing time is the most widely used accommodation at the state and national level. The administration of NAEP lasts about 90 minutes total for any student. This includes time spent distributing and collecting booklets, reading directions, and completing student background questionnaires. The actual cognitive test items are administered to students in two 25-minute sections for a total of 50 minutes. Given the brevity of the assessment, testing must be completed in one day. Therefore, any extended time for SD and ELLs must be provided on the day of the testing. State assessments are administered over several days, so some students with special needs are able to take a test in “chunks” over more than one day. Note that most states require that any section of the state test begun is to be completed on the same day it was started. Under present assessment procedure, NAEP test administrators cannot extend the testing time beyond the one day. That is not a problem because any one student is tested on one NAEP subject while on state assessments the students are taking multiple tests over longer period of time.

NAEP extra time provisions should be offered to SD and ELL students as a way to convince school and district personnel to include their eligible SD and ELL students in the NAEP assessment.

7. As noted earlier in the paper, the most widely used accommodations at the state and district levels are also offered by NAEP, so the above suggested guidelines should work effectively with the NAEP testing of SD and ELL students. The few accommodations on some state assessments, such as read-aloud of reading assessment and the use of calculator for all sections of the mathematics assessment, cannot be offered by NAEP for technical reasons—namely because such accommodations will adversely impact the constructs NAEP measures, thus reducing the validity of the assessment.
8. The application of these procedures, as well as other participation decisions, should be monitored by NCES and NAGB. There are two suggested ways to do this:
 - Have the NAEP field staff request written explanations from school staff for any student excluded from NAEP testing. Analyze the results to determine if the exclusion explanations are consistent with NAEP guidelines.

- Have the state NAEP Coordinator pull a sub-sample of schools and review participation decisions with an official from each school.

In each case, the outside scrutiny will serve to notify local educators about the seriousness of participation decisions (and the need to appropriately document them), as well as to serve to monitor the application of these procedures for future review and improvement.

These guidelines are straightforward, reasonable, and simple to apply. They are consistent with most state requirements for participating in the state testing programs under NCLB requirements. The suggested guidelines are worthy of consideration by the National Assessment Governing Board.

Summary and Conclusions

Nationwide, the percentage of the total public school population identified as special education and/or English language learners increased from 10% to 22% between 1992 and 2007 at the 4th grade level and from 10% to 18% at the 8th grade level.⁴ The corresponding percentages at the state level varied significantly with a high of 43% in California to a low of 12% in Mississippi at the 4th grade level (see Tables 1 and 2). State policies on the participation and accommodation of SD and ELL have changed significantly in recent years as a result of NCLB. State policies are becoming more inclusive by providing more test accommodations to their students. Increases in state assessment participation rates are related to increases in NAEP participation rates for students with disabilities in 8th grade.⁵ Since 1998, the increased use of accommodations with the NAEP assessment has corresponded to increased participation rates of SD and ELL at the national level but varied significantly at the state and district levels.

For ELL who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for more than a year and their educational instruction is English, the student should not be exempted from NAEP testing. Such students should be tested in reading without using a read-the-reading test accommodation, but they should have the possibility of using other accommodations like dual language or glossary of terms for NAEP assessments in mathematics and science. Research studies indicate that whether a student with disabilities participates in and receives certain accommodations on states' tests usually determines whether the student participates in NAEP. If NAEP does not offer the same accommodations, then the student is most likely excluded from NAEP testing. If a student with disabilities participates in an alternate testing form on the state assessment, it is very likely that the student will be excluded from NAEP assessment by school personnel.

While the present NAEP assessment procedures may not be appropriate for a small percentage of students, estimated to be less than 2% of the student population, a large percentage of the excluded students are capable of participating meaningfully in NAEP testing. It has been estimated that approximately 85% of students with disabilities, many of whom have been excluded from assessments, are able to participate with or without accommodations.⁶

⁴ NAEP. (2007).

⁵ American Institute for Research (AIR). (2006). *Interactions among policies, participation, and accommodation rates on state assessment and NAEP*, 4. Washington, D.C.

⁶ National Center on Educational Outcomes. (1996). *Synthesis Report No 25*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.

Attachment A

Issues and Questions Raised by NAGB Staff

During the course of preparing this paper, staff of the National Assessment Governing Board raised a number of issues for the authors of this paper to consider. Each of these questions is listed in *italics* below, along with a response to the issue by the authors.

1. Are there uniform accommodation rules for SD and ELLs within states? Across states?

States generally classify their accommodations into four categories:

- Timing
- Scheduling
- Presentation
- Response

There are only some uniformity of rules for accommodations for students with disabilities across states and much less for English language learners. There have been a couple of influences that have brought about some of this uniformity. These include a publication of the Council of Chief State School Offices SCASS project (“Accommodations Manual—How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Students with Disabilities,” Sandra J. Thompson, Amanda B. Morse, Michael Sharpe, and Sharon Hall, August 2005) and the periodic collection and dissemination of information on assessment accommodations by the University of Minnesota National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Some state documents are more thorough in their presentation of accommodations for students with disabilities. These lists can be quite lengthy. Some states have developed separate lists for each of their assessments; others have one combined list.

A few states presented information on assessment accommodations permitted by NAEP. The source(s) for this information was not cited. Are these lists taken from NAEP materials? Are these actual assessment accommodations permitted? Has some organization (e.g., NCES or NAGB) reviewed these lists and sanctioned them?

Another issue is for NAGB to better understand the manner in which assessment accommodations are decided upon – the power of the local IEP team and the more limited response of the state education agency. In the late 1990’s, local IEP teams were officially given the power to determine which accommodations students with disabilities received. By contrast, state education agencies were given the power to determine how the scores that resulted from these accommodations would be treated – which would be considered “standard” accommodations (by Federal definition, these are assessments that are sufficiently valid for the student to count as participating for NCLB purposes and

their score counting in the performance of the school) and those which would be considered as “non-standard” and thus not counting towards either participation or performance. Because states had the ultimate power to make the final decision, many states felt that it was fair to “warn” local districts that if they used a particular accommodation, that it would be treated as if the student had not tested at all; however, the final decision is left to the IEP team.

The implications of this for NAGB is that it cannot simply impose a standard set of accommodations on schools (and thus on IEP teams) without running into the rules set forth by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the U.S. Department of Education. Unless there is some process to require participation in NAEP at the student level (as NCLB requires of states and local districts), then IEP teams are free to decide that a student should receive a particular accommodation and if this is not forthcoming, not to participate at all.

Given the potential lack of uniformity in participation across states due to local IEP decision making, we recommend that NCES requires NAEP field staff to request documents from each school for any student who is excluded from the NAEP assessment. Was the student designated for the state’s AA-AAS and thus not eligible to participate in NAEP, or was the student designated for the state’s AA-MAS and thus ought to be given the special NAEP booklet?

Another way to check the consistency of IEP team decisions is to have the State NAEP Coordinator tasked to review the SD and ELL participation decisions in some percentage of schools in the state.

In either case, the outside scrutiny will serve to indicate to schools that participation decisions are important and being observed.

2. Do extra time, read-alouds, and calculator use vary among states?

The answer to this question is yes and no. The provision of extra time is almost universal among the states. Since many state assessments are criterion-referenced and are untimed, the timing of the tests is not critical. This is more of an issue in states that use augmented norm-referenced tests, since these typically have time limits set aside for each part of the test. For timed tests, most states offer time-and-a half or double-time. Virtually all states permit additional time, but the test must be completed on the same day that it was begun. Since NAEP is a criterion-referenced test, it is relatively easy to offer more time as an accommodation without jeopardizing the standardization of the assessment.

The use of calculators is more variable among the states. The calculators that are permitted are often simple function varieties without the ability to be programmed. Most states that permit calculator use specify that students with disabilities can use them on the sections of the mathematics or science tests where other students are permitted to use them. Only a few states permit their use on so-called “non-calculator” sections of their assessments. NAGB has a calculator section in its assessment, and students with

disabilities are permitted to use their calculator on these parts, a policy that is consistent with most of the states.

Calculators should not be used for items that measure students' ability to compute using basic arithmetic operations. Using calculators for such items will produce scores that are not comparable to those obtained when such an accommodation is not used.

Most states permit all but their Reading or English Language Arts assessments to be read aloud. Some provide readers' scripts for this and some even provide the assessment read on CD or cassette, in order to standardize the administration of the assessments. Because the NAEP assessments were read to students up until the mid-1980's, it should be possible for NAEP to consider providing the taped assessments as an accommodation to both students with disabilities and English language learners. However, the reading assessment should not be read aloud to students with disabilities, since this accommodation would change or violate the construct (reading decoding skills) being measured and render the assessment to be a test of listening skills.

3. Should a screener or data from a previously administered test be used to determine whether students should be asked to take the NAEP?

The pool of students who should participate in NAEP reading and writing assessments should be those students with disabilities who do not participate in the state's alternate assessment of alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS), as well as the English language learners who are past their first year in the United States (since they need not participate in the ELA assessment at the state level). All ELL should participate in other NAEP assessments, regardless of the length of time enrolled in a U.S. school. This includes all of the students with disabilities who are taught in regular classrooms, regardless of their achievement level. This will include some students with disabilities who are measured by the states' alternate assessments of modified achievement standards (AA-MAS). These so-called "2% students" should be able to participate in NAEP, especially if an easier or more accessible form of the NAEP (which is still statistically linked to the NAEP scale) is used. This could be an assessment that is constructed in a manner that states have used to build this version of their regular assessment so that these students are better able to participate in their state assessment program.

Therefore, a NAEP screener should not be necessary. All students with disabilities except those who participated in the states' AA-AAS and all ELL past their first year in the U.S. should participate in NAEP in reading and writing, while all ELL should participate in all other NAEP assessments, regardless of how long they have been enrolled in a school in the U.S.

4. Should an easy or accessible booklet comprised of items that are easy be used? If so, what criteria should be used to determine who gets them – instructional level, standardized exam, or a brief screener?

The goal of building this “easier” or more accessible NAEP assessment booklet is to make sure that the assessment level is appropriate for the students assessed. As mentioned in question 3 above, this is called an alternate assessment of modified achievement standards (AA-MAS). Many states have been building such forms for their state assessment system, since they will permit the state to more accurately assess the achievement of this so-called “2% student” group. It will be helpful for NAEP to do likewise, and we suggest that NAEP follow the lead of the states in doing so. One way to design such a form would be to work with several of the states that are developing AA-MAS assessments and their advisors to design a NAEP AA-MAS suitable for these students with mild to moderate disabilities.

5. What ELPA tests are used in different states and what is their cut score for quality for regular course placement or testing in English?

There are several major efforts that were federally funded several years ago. Of these multi-state consortia, only two have survived and grown. These include the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium, currently with 19 states, and the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA), with about 8 states. Otherwise, individual states have either adopted a commercially available instrument, such as Pearson’s *Sorosis* English Language Program (SELP) or CTB/McGraw-Hill’s *Language Assessment Survey* (LAS). Other states have developed their own assessment, either alone or with one or two other states.

There is no standard across the states (except within individual consortia) for determining regular course placement or testing in English. By federal law (NCLB), states must assess students in English starting in their third year enrolled in a school in the United States. The cut scores that states have set for their English language proficiency tests have not been used long enough for states to have a strong sense that they are set at a level that will assure that students can succeed academically on their own. In fact, the field has had a history of setting cut scores that have proven to be too low or otherwise inadequate. Therefore, most states are proceeding cautiously, setting tentative levels that are high, and including teacher and parent judgment in making decisions.

In at least one state, cut scores for the English proficiency test have been set higher than for the state’s general ELA assessment, perhaps to keep students in the LEP program for financial reasons.

6. Should an oral fluency screener for determining which students should be tested in English and those tested with a Spanish-English bilingual dictionary be used?

States already have an oral fluency (as well as written fluency) assessment in place—their federally required English language proficiency assessments of reading, writing,

listening and speaking. If such an assessment was to be used, this assessment would provide uniformity within each state at no cost to NAGB. However, given the rules of NCLB, it may make sense to leave this decision to local educators. Given that in their first year in the U.S., ELL don't have to participate (as is the case of ELA), it may make sense to omit students new to the U.S. in their first year from the NAEP reading and writing assessments. All ELL students could be assessed in their native language (in mathematics, science, and social studies), so might be offered either a bilingual Spanish-English test or a bilingual word-for-word dictionary or both. The third year students would have to be tested in English, but could also be offered the bilingual word-for-word dictionary.

7. For Spanish speaking LEP students, is it better to take the exam in Spanish only or use a bilingual Spanish-English version?

Research has shown that a bilingual form of the assessment is the most beneficial to students who are learning English, since the Spanish-speaking student can refer to the Spanish version if there is a word or phrase that he or she does not understand in English. Not all students are literate in Spanish, so the English version may be helpful for them in understanding the Spanish version.

Dual Language Assessment

The layout in the NAEP dual language Spanish/English test booklets had the Spanish version of the items on the left-hand pages and the corresponding English version of the items of the right-hand pages. For example, the mathematical Spanish/English dual language NAEP assessment booklet for the 8th grade was structured as two 55 minute sessions with 30 NAEP cognitive items in each session. No calculators were allowed in session 1, but calculators and rulers were handed out for use in session 2. Overall, the NAEP mathematics dual language test booklet had a similar structure and content that is consistent with the NAGB Mathematics Framework in that the booklet covered the same content strands and item types as any other NAEP mathematics booklet intended for general education students. The main differences are the length of the booklet, which is twice as large as other NAEP mathematics booklets due to the two languages, and the time for the test administration is twice as long to allow students to read both languages if necessary and to ensure meaningful participation of students who may not possess strong language proficiency in either English or Spanish who may need additional time to understand the questions.

A dual language or bilingual booklet is a more effective accommodation strategy than a single language translation for students who may have studied the subject tested (such as mathematics) in a classroom where English was the primary language of instruction. Students at the lower end of the English proficiency may benefit from test booklets in mathematics that have minimal complex language structures that are incidental to the mathematical content knowledge being assessed. NAEP may want to consider developing a test booklet that measures computational and numerical problems with a minimal English language load. This strategy is effective; it is also valid because it measures a

portion of the NAGB defined mathematics framework and thus is very likely to fit in the overall NAEP scale.

8. Should an incentive for schools be used to encourage testing? It might be to assign a low score to non-participating students.

Given that IEP teams make participation decisions for students with disabilities on their own, and use state guidelines (which tend to be sparse) to do so for English language learners, it is not clear that any incentive, even negative ones, would actually encourage the assessment of more students. Assigning a low score to the student might work on a state test, where the results are used for accountability purposes. However, on NAEP, it won't have as much power locally as it might at the state level. There it might encourage state-NAEP coordinators to emphasize the availability of a wide-range of accommodations, and to strongly emphasize participation. However, local educators are free to make their own participation decisions, especially when parents can opt their child out of NAEP (but cannot do so for state assessments). Parents might feel differently if they received a report of results from the assessment, but since they don't, it would be easy for local educators to "recruit" parents to indicate that they don't want their child assessed.